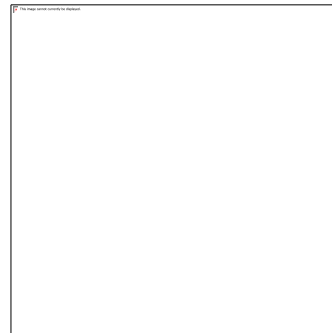

Including Me in Virginia

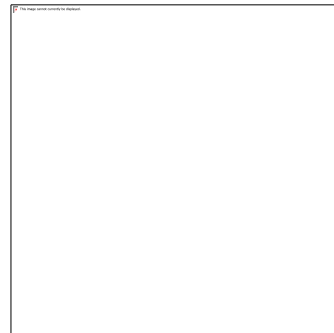
Allison Thurman, Kim Owens,
Angela Langrehr, Liz Altieri,
— Tauna Szymanski, Maureen —
Powers, and Christine Cadwaller

A Collaborative Team



- ❖ Including Me in Virginia is a Commonwealth-wide Inclusion Task Force comprised of:
 - Parents of children with and without disabilities
 - Advocacy and family support groups, including Arc of Virginia, Arlington Inclusion Task Force, Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond, and Virginia TASH

Our Purpose



❖ To communicate with parents, educators, and communities about:

- raising awareness of the continuum of placement options for...
- presenting the benefits of including...
- and sharing resources for effectively including...



students with disabilities with general education peers in their neighborhood schools in Virginia

Our Strategies

❖ Build a connected community of parents, educators and across the Commonwealth

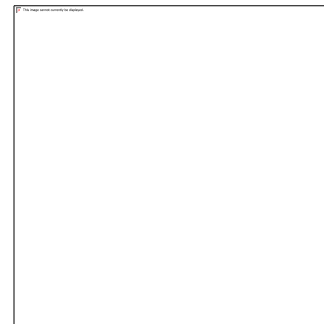
- Connect parents and educators who want to advance inclusive education at the local, regional and state levels
- Exchange information about inclusion through Facebook and a web page
- Use a dedicated set of volunteers to lead the Task Force's efforts and serve as Steering Committee for the Task Force

❖ Systems Advocacy

- Disseminate resources, including advocacy talking points, and collect and share stories on inclusion
- Provide updates on local, regional, and state advocacy activities, and assist with the

advocates

Our Strategies (cont.)



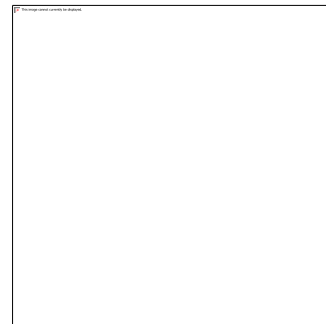
❖ Parent Education and Support

- Create guidance materials for parents
- Facilitate family-to-family support
- Webinars
- Collect feedback from families and share stories to identify barriers to inclusion
- Assist families with system advocacy

❖ Educator Technical Assistance

- Draft and disseminate technical assistance materials for educators

Future Plans - Including Me in Virginia



- ❖ Monthly stakeholder collaboration (conference calls)

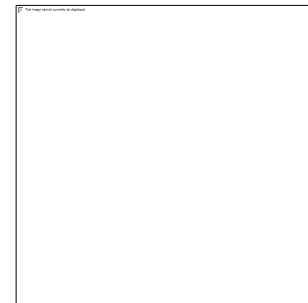
- ❖ Regional and State Advocacy

- Advocacy at the General Assembly and SSEAC levels
- Identifying, connecting and empowering regional representatives
- Developing resources for advocacy (i.e., talking points, success stories)
- Disseminating a list of “inclusion” speakers that regions can access

- ❖ Parent Education /Educator Technical Assistance

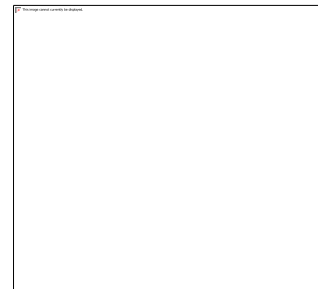
- Developing guidance materials (one page FAQ, talking points) for families and identifying methods to disseminate

Accomplishments/ Future Plans - Arlington Inclusion Task Force



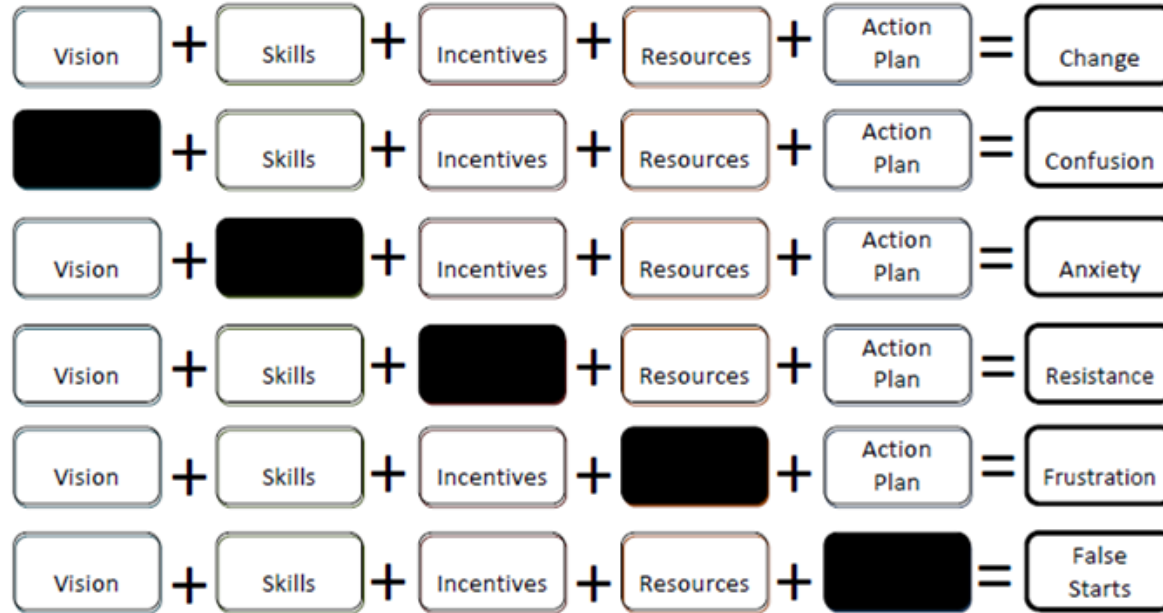
- ❖ Information/Education Campaign (including training By Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education to 300+ general education and special education professionals in Arlington)
- ❖ Advocacy at the school board, District-level Work Group on Inclusive Practices, SEAC, Special Education PTA levels

Commendations to SSEAC for:



- ❖ Supporting the VDOE Inclusion Academies and Co-teaching demonstration sites as well as the inclusion workgroup and the continued development of best practices involving co-teaching and collaborative instruction.
- ❖ For recognizing the inconsistency of inclusive practices and the need to develop a guidance document that identifies exemplary inclusive practices such as universal design for learning (UDL); to work with TTAC to increase professional development on the use of assistive technology to provide equal access to the general curriculum; and for TTAC to develop a self-assessment to determine barriers to universal accessibility in classrooms as well as school events and extracurriculars.
- ❖ Regarding recommendations related to the success of inclusive practices, we commend the SSEAC and the VDOE for the progress in
 - Developing guidance on the impact of alternative assessment choice on diploma options;

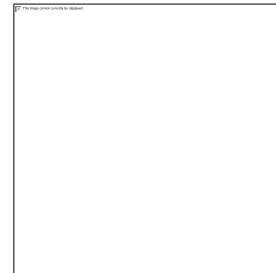
Managing Complex Change



Adapted from Knoster, T., Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2000). A framework for thinking about systems change. In R. Villa & J. Thousands. (Eds.). *Restructuring for caring and effective education: Piecing the puzzle together*. (pp. 93-128). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Systems
change
requires
multiple
components
to be
successful

Requests to SSEAC - Data/Support System



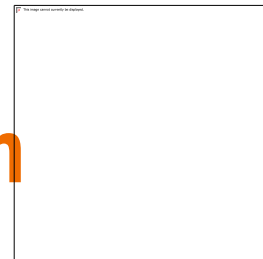
1. Perform an in-depth review of the Indicator 5 data surrounding inclusion of low incidence disabilities and ethnicities including review of disparities across elementary, middle and high school. In the review, compare school districts to identify ones that may have higher or lower than average general education placements. Collect and analyze information on placement of students in the Indicator 14 data to research potential relationship between inclusive high school (and/or elementary and middle school) opportunities and post-secondary outcomes.
2. Recommend VDOE establish a Virginia Inclusion Center of Excellence similar to Maryland Center for Inclusive Education (MCIE) or New Jersey Center for Inclusive Education (NJCIE) to meet the need for capacity building of inclusive education at the local level. This should include:

Inclusion specialists to provide technical assistance across the Commonwealth.

The development of resources for educators and families about inclusive education and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) decision making.

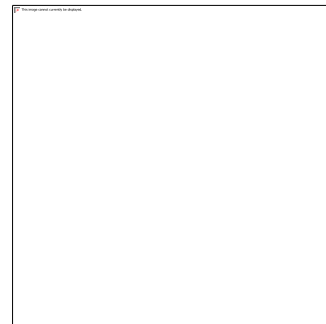
Networking and learning opportunities for parents and educators across the Commonwealth.

Requests to SSEAC - Training/Communication



1. Distribute parent training and fact sheets through SEAC membership and the organizations represented by the membership.
2. Communicate to all local SEACs about: 1) the resources Including Me in Virginia is developing, 2) identifying parent advocates for inclusion as well as educators who have inclusive classrooms with the goal of networking them across the Commonwealth with others, 3) and suggestions for forming and executing an Inclusive Education subcommittee at the local SEAC level.
3. Recommend VDOE and TTAC conduct Inclusive Education Symposiums for general and special educators, paraprofessionals, administrators, support personnel (e.g., speech, OT, etc.), and advocates to be presented by established experts on inclusive educational practices. This would be part of an ongoing education series that builds on videos and learning associated with co-teaching demonstration sites with a focus on best practices identified for students with low-incidence disabilities and those on alternative assessments.

Requests to SSEAC - Policy/Membership



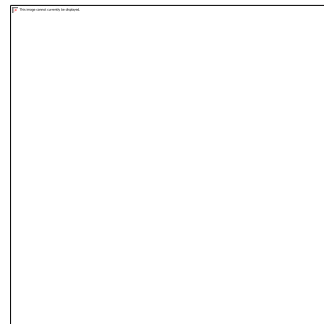
1. Add Including Me in Virginia Task Force members to the VDOE Inclusion Working Group.
2. Recommend VDOE develop an Inclusion guidance document(s) to clarify:

LRE decision making (i.e., students would only be removed from LRE setting upon student or parent request, or when meaningful and appropriate supports and accommodations have been provided to allow that student to succeed in the general education setting -- academically, behaviorally, and emotionally -- and those efforts have failed.)

Best practices in inclusive education (including gifted students, ELLs, and students with complex and significant support needs) in the general education setting in their neighborhood school, with differentiated or modified instruction for students requiring more intensive supports.

Multi-tiered system of services and supports as an essential component to inclusive education.

Feedback Requested from SSEAC



1. Assistance from SSEAC membership (including advocacy organizations, Commonwealth agencies, and regional representatives) on strategies to disseminate information/awareness to each organization's respective stakeholders?
2. How can we make this effort a general education movement across the state versus a special education effort?
3. How can we influence the local level districts so that IEP teams start placement discussions at the least restrictive environment (using data and not opinion and using all necessary supports and accommodations) and only move to most restrictive environment when least restrictive is not working?

Questions or Feedback?

Contact:

includingmeva@gmail.com

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